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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the implementation of an educational collaboration project providing 40 preservice teachers with training and experiences in authentic/performance based portfolio assessment. Three professors and a public school teacher designed and facilitated activities in portfolio establishment and assessment for university students working in an elementary classroom. Pre-classroom experiences for the university students included training in rubric and calibration development, as well as specific oral reading, fluency, comprehension, word recognition/analysis, and story retelling procedures. While the time commitment required by professors and teachers to carry out the program was at first underestimated, overall evaluation of the program found it to be highly effective and popular with all participants. Benefits of the project from the preservice teacher perspective included training in design and implementation of authentic/performance evaluation processes, as well as interaction with elementary students and the opportunity to participate in establishing a cross-educational collaboration model. Benefits for participating elementary students included self-analysis, individual enrichment, attention and encouragement. (PB)

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A University Pre-Service and Elementary School Portfolio Project: Reporting the Collaboration, Procedures and Reflections

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Abstract

This study reports the implementation procedures of an educational collaboration project providing pre-service teachers training and experiences in authentic/performance based assessment. Three professors and a public school teacher designed and facilitated techniques in portfolio establishment and assessment implemented by the university students in an elementary classroom. Pre-classroom experiences for the university students included training in rubric and calibration development, as well as specific oral reading, fluency, comprehension, word recognition/analysis, and story retelling procedures.

Benefits of the project from the pre-service teacher position included the training in and implementation of evaluation processes, as well as interactions and authentic experiences with elementary students, and the opportunity to participate in establishing a cross-educational collaboration model. Self-analysis, individual enrichment, attention, and encouragement were benefits for the elementary students. Other mutual benefits, obstacles and reflections are summarized as a procedural model for future portfolio collaboration projects.

A University Pre-Service and Elementary School Portfolio Project: Reporting the Collaboration, Procedures, and Reflections

Altering Current Testing Practices

Educators in all dominions of the profession, from university professors to classroom teachers are searching for techniques to make assessment procedures authentic. Quests for authenticity set the stage for altering the current classroom testing practices of dependency on standardized tests, to implementing performance based assessment procedures. Johnson (1987) reported educators advocating shifting evaluation processes agree that standardized tests have a place within the total assessment picture, but that scores alone are of limited value when compared to understanding the student's abilities, skills and interests.

Chittenden and Courtney (1989) found that educators do not need better tests to estimate a student's status; instead they need assessment techniques that bring out the links between emerging skills and the foundations of literacy. It is agreed those additional evaluation techniques should be related to prior learning and reflect day to day activities, goals, and student growth. Additionally, the process and resulting products should provide more meaningful information to students, teachers

and parents.

In categories of authentic assessment, there are several types of procedures that evaluate beyond the standardized test including: observations, journals, exhibitions and experiments. However, the evaluation technique used to augment traditional testing that is receiving the most attention in all spectrums of education today is the portfolio.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio's are defined as systematic, purposeful and meaningful collections of the learner's work (DeFina, 1992). Portfolios have been and are very common in the artistic and architectural worlds but have not been implemented in most educational settings. Often educational portfolios have been confused with the process of indiscriminately gathering or saving student's work for periodic distribution; a file, but there are many differences between an everything collection and a systematic, purposeful portfolio. A true portfolio requires systematic student, teacher and parental decisions about proceedings, enclosures, work goals, progress and material destinations. Self analysis helps make portfolio assessment meaningful and allows for student autonomy/responsibility.

Pre-service Teachers Needs

Researchers (Hill & Ruptic, 1994; Johnson, 1987) have found several ways the use of portfolio assessment can benefit teachers, students, and parents. If portfolios are to become a working part of educational expectations, pre-service teachers need

training in preparation, as well as experiences in methods of portfolio creation, implementation procedures and evaluation. Experiences in portfolio assessment offer pre-service teachers a classroom tool that is context and individually responsive that will certainly be influential in that teacher's future. Such training provides future teachers with valuable procedures to and methods of determining what each child knows or doesn't know, the degree of understanding, as well as providing information as to methods each child uses in constructing language, develops literacy, and problem solves. Additionally, pre-service teachers benefit from experiences where parents are included as members of the child's learning team. This information is supported by DeFina (1992) who found including parents input to be an important educational link.

The Portfolio Collaboration Model

Three professors and a public school teacher designed, developed and facilitated a collaborative semester long project to provide both university pre-service teachers and elementary students authentic experiences in portfolio assessment. In addition, the university pre-service students were trained in rubric and calibration development and implementation, as well as other procedures including oral reading, fluency, comprehension, word recognition/analysis and story retelling.

The researchers believed a strong theoretical and practical background would be necessary for the success of this collaborative project and began with a review of the appropriate literature and reports of similar projects. Further the

professors surveyed a three state area South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa to determine the current use of portfolios and to determine how comfortable teachers were with practicing the portfolio concept in their classrooms. The results showed a need for educating future teachers, that practicing teachers were not comfortable starting or using portfolios and felt more practical information was needed (Hoag, Zalud, & Wood, 1993). As a result of the research and the survey information the team determined from a knowledge perspective the project was viable. The professors wished to determine for themselves and for the methods students they teach, the portfolio process, the strengths and weaknesses of portfolios and the practicality of using portfolios in the elementary schools.

It was determined systematic training for the university students was needed and that practical concerns must be addressed. There must be an organizational plan for access to materials and supplies for the university students, a method for data collection, including storage, sharing, evaluation, and review of the taped readings, and forums for university student feedback. The team developed a series of forms appropriate for the project (see Appendix).

From the elementary classroom perspective, the teacher determined the scope of the project must be manageable and the data collection must fit into the already functioning third grade schedule. Other concerns were the choice of student and teacher reading/curriculum materials, the appropriate setting/space for data to be collected, and the opportunities for parental involvement. A student teacher who had

previously completed the methods classes at the university was actively involved in the planning and implementation of this project. Parents became involved by giving permission for their children's participation and in the classroom teacher's anticipation of reporting individual childrens' results during parent teacher conferences.

Forty pre-service teachers enrolled in Language Arts, Social Studies and Reading methods classes from the University of South Dakota and a third grade classroom of 21 students in Jolley Elementary School of Vermillion, South Dakota were selected to participate in the project. Two cohorts were established to aid in systematic data collection and a master schedule plan was devised to accommodate the elementary students over a two week repeated cycle. Neither set of students (elementary or university) had previously been involved with portfolios or other evaluation procedures such as rubrics or calibration. The public school required the professors to meet with the principal to explain the intent and the scope of the project. As children (elementary school students) were involved in this project the university requires that all procedures be cleared through a Human Subjects Review Committee. This procedure requires written submissions from the school system, the professors and signed release forms from each parent. This procedure delayed the beginning of the project and caused the two semester plans to become a single semester project.

Project Implementation

When the portfolio project was introduced to the university students, the

response was overwhelmingly positive and enthusiasm remained high throughout the project. University students were assigned randomly to each elementary school student for the entire semester. The professors trained the university students in calibration and evaluation using rubrics. Each student was to evalute independently of the university partners and then meet to determine the calibrated scores for their elementary student. Other training involved procedures of word recognition analysis, story retelling competency, phrasing and word attack marking procedures to be used in calculation of reading skills (See Appendix for Specific Procedures, Script, Oral Reading Miscues Code Sheet, Recognition Analysis Summary Sheet, Retelling Evaluation Form, Student Self Evaluation Form, Teacher Evaluation Form of Student, Reminders for Text Evaluation). The training was accomplished in 4 hours of instructional and practice time.

The team consulted to determine the least intrusive time of day, subject matter, and the length and level of reading material to be used. Two types of reading tasks were chosen. The teacher chosen materials common to all readers would be implemented every other week and the elementary students would self-select material for the alternate weeks. It was anticipated that the dual reading plan would provide additional insight into the comprehension and fluency of the reader. The supposition was that there would be a definite contrast between the fluency, reading rate and interest level recorded contrasting teacher selected materials and the student chosen materials would be noted in most of the twenty two third graders. The semester

schedules (university and public school) would allow for a total of four recordings, two teacher chosen passages and two elementary student chosen passes to be used for diagnosis of each child.

Next, the professors visited the third grade room, explained the goals of the project to the students, establishing rapport and answering questions. The elementary students reported eagerness to participate in the project, no concerns about being audio taped, and were eager to become involved with the university students. Parental permission forms were sent home with the children and returned.

Tape recordings of each learner's responses were made for the university student to be used for future referrals, accuracy of evaluation and calibration processes. While listening to the learner, a university student completed two evaluation forms, checking responses designating fluency and comprehension, and evaluating the third graders on the summary sheets. As the project progressed throughout the semester, the professors made daily inquiries to the teacher and the university students as to the progress, situations and problems encounter.

Evaluation and Summary

Providing field experiences that are future oriented continue to be a priority of the professors in pre-service classes at the University of South Dakota. This portfolio experience provided a perfect venue for bringing classrooms together while training the pre-service teachers in new skills. The semester long experience provided sound training in performance assessment and moved the curriculum from the textbook and

university classroom into a functioning, practical elementary setting. Future teachers developed and practiced authentic assessment techniques. Additionally, the pre-service students were able to work with third graders in a small university situation, become familiar with "real classroom" curriculum constraints and experience a variety of reading and re-telling levels. These students, too, became familiar with portfolio assessment in action. They came to feel very confident when using recording and interpreting data, calibrating and using rubrics to clearly assess the elementary students progress.

The professors scheduled a two hour period of time to visit Jolley School and taught specific common skills identified by the university students as needing re-teaching or refreshing. Those skills included story sequencing and gaining the main idea. This event provided the closure for the project and the "reading party" was appreciated by the elementary students.

Some of the obstacles and learnings of this project were: 1) The amount of time that must be devoted to make a project such as this work, from the university professors to methods students, to the teacher and student teacher was underestimated. Although the research had provided warnings as to the time committment needed and all parties had prior knowledge of this variable, time was an important factor and should be considered a primary concern when replicating this project; 2) Conflicting schedules became a surprising but hopefully uniquely a University of South Dakota issue, as the original plan was for the methods students were to

collect the data and process it as part of their classroom responsibilities and that could not happen. The class conflict involving the majority of the methods students did not allow for the students to collect data when the elementary students were available. Therefore, the professors collected the data and the university students interpreted it. What the university students missed during the taping sequences include the side comments by the students before and after the tapings, as well as the third graders body language, glances and smiles. Additionally, the university students should have had the opportunity prepare activities and re-teach the skills to the elementary students as a whole group activity. The professors felt another time the closure should be totally students to students with their role as facilitators. Although these factors were somewhat disappointing from the university point of view and some interaction was lost, the project was not compromised due to the nature of the data and the goals of the project; 3) Reporting to parents during the scheduled 20 minute conference was an impossible goal. The plan was to play the tape for the parents and have them observe the cue, miscue analysis and review the assessment results on paper. In order to meet this goal separate conferences had to be scheduled.

All in all this portfolio assessment project met and exceeded expectations. As defined by DeFina (1992) a portfolio is a systematic, purposeful and meaningful collection of a student's work. This project was systematic, in planning and in delivery. It was purposeful in focus, and meaningful to the university as well as the

elementary school students and the respective teaching teams.

One of the strengths of portfolio assessment is that children were evaluated performing tasks that are consistent with prior methodology, through process and activity approaches. The university-elementary school portfolio project modeled those literacy goals. The university students assessed the third graders as the elementary students had been taught, constructing language, improving literacy and problem solving. The third graders were familiar with the skills required during their tapings. The authentic assessment procedures of fluency checking and story retelling provided measurable individual progress.

The elementary students were able to determine/measure their own progress by hearing themselves read at the beginning of the semester and contrasting their end of semester reading fluency. They were able to determine the results of the miscues and the story retelling. This self analysis builds skills so that each student can become an autonomous learner. The university students commented that often the miscues did not change the meaning, the children self corrected and knew when what they were reading did or did not make sense. The elementary teacher, principal and other public school officials report the project to be an overwhelming success from the standpoint of learner self-esteem, and self-assessment. See the appendix for Outcomes and Reflections containing teacher and professor comments.

The cooperation of the university pre-service teachers, the elementary school officials, the classroom teacher and the third graders was phenominal. The recorded

readings were used as planned and progress was noted by all the participants. Individual children found ways to provide feedback on their own work that was insightful and correctly analyzed. The pre-service teachers remained eager and conscientious. The university students were benefactors of classroom situations, requiring consistency in scoring and carefuly listening and re-listening to children for voice and other oral variances.

Projects across educational boundaries often pose many insurmountable logistical problems. This project was void of many of the anticipated difficulties, due in a large part to careful planning, the sequential implementation of the procedures and the continuous monitoring of progress. All participants in this portfolio project made plans to replicate the project and have it become a permanent part of the elementary curriculum and the university experience. The university professors feel the modeling the linking of curricular and educational domains should have positive effects when the pre-service teachers are in their own classrooms. The value did not go unnoticed as one university student suggested that other universities and elementary schools adopt this project. We believe there is no greater validation of any project than for the participants to suggest the events in which they had participated should serve a a model for other future educators.

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Appendix

Specific procedures

The type of reading scheduled on given days would be either teacher selected or student selected.

The students would read aloud from the material for 3 minutes.

Each student would be tape recorded.

After the reading, the student would be asked to retell the information.

USD professors would collect the data.

USD students would take the tape of the student reading and

6.1 compute the readability level of the passage

6.2 identify the type of reading material as narrative or expository

6.3 evaluate the oral miscues made by the student

6.4 judge the quality of retelling by the 3rd grade student

6.5 document the words per minute read during the 3 minute reading

6.6 return the material to the 3rd grade classroom within 2 days.

Mrs. Wood and Mr. Bischoff would use the information for conferences with the students and their parents.

SCRIPT:

Today you are going to read a story that (you/your teacher) selected aloud to me. I will record what you read aloud. This is not a race to see how fast you can read. Just read the story to me like you would read it to one of your classmates. When I tell you to begin, turn the story over (or open to the starting page) and read aloud. when I tell you to stop, give the story to me. I will ask you some questions about the story when you finish.

NOTES:

1. Reset the tape counter each time.

2. LOG the ips number on the examiner's sheet and on the cassette tape each time.

3. Check the readability level of each passage.

4. Graph wpm each time.

5. 3 minute time limit each time.

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell me as much as you can about the story.

2. What is the story mostly about?

3. Could this story really happen? How do you know?

Vermillion Public Schools - University of South Dakota
Portfolio Project
Oral Reading Miscues Code Sheet
Zalud, Hoag, Wood, Wood

1. Omissions -- during oral reading the student leaves out (omits) a part of a word, an entire word, or several words (phrases or sentence).

   Mark by circling the word part or words omitted.

2. Mispronunciation -- during oral reading the student pronounces a non word for a real word.

   Mark by writing the non word pronunciation above the real word.

3. Partial mispronunciation -- during oral reading the student pronounces part of a real word as a non word.

   Mark by writing the partial mispronunciation above the word.

4. Substitution -- during oral reading the student pronounces a real word in place of an existing word.

   Mark by writing the substituted word above the word for which it was substituted.

5. Insertion -- during oral reading the student pronounces additional word(s) not in the text (inserts them in to the sentence).

   Mark with a caret and write the words added above the line.

6 Reversal -- during the oral reading the student pronounces a word as if some of the letters were reversed.

   Mark by writing "R" over the word reversed in pronunciation.

7. Repetition -- during oral reading the student repeats a word more than one time.

   Mark by drawing a wavy line under the word or words.

8. Pauses or poor phrasing -- during oral reading the student pauses unnaturally (4 seconds or less) between words or phrases.

   Mark by writing a diagonal slash where the unnatural pauses occur.

9. Teacher pronounces -- during oral reading the student pauses form more than 5 seconds or asks for help pronouncing a word.

   Mark by writing "TP" above the word pronounced by the teacher.

10. Disregard for pronunciation -- during oral reading the student does not attend to punctuation.

    Mark by placing an "X" over the disregarded punctuation mark.

11. Words per minute read -- the average number of words read by the student in one minute of reading.

    Count the total number of words read during the 3 minutes and divide by 3.

Portfolio Project
Word Recognition Analysis Summary Sheet
Zalud/Hoag/Wood/Wood
University of South Dakota

Elementary Student _____ Date _____

University Student _____

	Meaning Change	No Meaning Change	Total Both Categories
1. Omissions			
2. Mispronunciations			
3. Substitutions			
4. Insertions			
5. Teacher Pronounced			
6. Reversals			
7. Repetitions			
8. Translocations			
9. Self Corrections			
10. Pauses			
11. Disregards Punctuation			

Portfolio Project
Retelling Evaluation Form
Zalud/Hoag/Wood/Wood
University of South Dakota

Elementary Student _____ Date _____

University Student _____

	1 Not Occur	2	3 Prompted	4	5 Accurate
Stated main idea					
Retold correct sequence					
Made personal associations					
Made classroom associations					
Oral language quality					
Fluency of expression					

Quality of Retelling Rubric

____ Student generalized beyond the text; included main ideas; included details in the correct sequence; tied the information to personal life experiences; tied the information to classroom learning experiences; used exceptional oral language qualities and retelling was fluent.

____ Student included main ideas; included most details; retelling was logical in sequence; made limited associations to personal experiences or classroom experiences; oral language quality was adequate and retelling was generally fluent.

____ Student recalled main ideas and details with the aid of prompts; student could associate information to personal experiences or classroom experiences with prompts; oral language and retelling fluency was adequate only.

____ Student could only partially recall main ideas and details; few associations to personal experiences or classroom experiences occurred; oral language and reading fluency were not up to expectations.

____ Student recalled few details; personal or classroom associations did not occur; oral language and fluency were not adequate.

Student Self Evaluation Form
Zalud, Hoag, Wood, Wood

1. What do you like about reading?

_____

_____

2. What don't you like about reading?

_____

_____

3. Do you like it best when you pick the book you read or when your teacher picks the book you read?

_____

_____

4. Answer these questions with yes or no.

When I read I... 4.1 can pick out and remember the most important idea. yes no

4.2 can remember most of the details. yes no

4.3 can retell the details in order. yes no

4.4 try to think about how what I am reading is related to things I already know or things my teacher has talked about. yes no

5. I am a good/average/poor reader because:_____

_____

6. I would like to read more stories/books about:_____

_____.

Teacher Evaluation Form of Student
Zalud, Hoag, Wood, Wood

1. Does the student like it best when you pick the book or when your s/he picks the book to read?

_____

_____

2. Answer these questions with yes or no.

When s/he reads s/he.

2.1 can pick out and remember the most important idea. yes no

2.2 can remember most of the details. yes no

2.3 can retell the details in order. yes no

2.4 tries to think about how the reading is related to things already known or things my teacher has talked about. yes no

2.5 reads with sufficient fluency. yes no

5. Is a good/average/poor reader because:_____

_____

Reminders for text evaluation

Zalud/Hoag/Wood/Wood
The University of South Dakota

1. Do not erase the tape. Check and double check to insure you are pressing play only.

2. Always set the tape counter at zero after the tape is rewound. Then forward the tape to the indicated number to start listening.

3. Record the words per minute and the selection title on the graph paper.

4. Be sure to count the number of each type of error and record appropriately.

5. Indicate the number of errors that changed the meaning.

6. Evaluate the quality of retelling. Calibrate your results with your partner.

7. Return all materials to their respective places. Tape and printed materials into the student file. Tape recorder -- carefully back into the box so the plug in adapter does not damage the tape player.

Outcomes and reflections

A. Teacher comments:

1. We didn't realize the work and time involved to use the portfolio method of assessment properly.

2. We would like to start a similar project next year now that we know some of the hurdles we face.

3. We plan to send the tapes and marked reading copies up to 4th grade.

4. The activities that the professors did in our room to reinforce understanding of main ideas and details were beneficial to the children. They seemed more interested in them since they helped to decide the area of the presentations.

5. The children really developed a positive attitude about the project. They were disappointed when the project time ended.

6. Children need to understand there is a real reason for using portfolios. Some of the children did others did not.

7. To do a project of this nature requires a very good routine.

8. When we try this again, we will really have to work on clarifying expectations to students.

B. **Professors Comments:**

1. This required a great amount of time.

2. For this to work, the school systems will need to change some of their views.

3. We were disappointed that the teacher wanted to use the tapes and materials for parent - teacher conferences, but didn't because of time limitations. Special conferences would have to be scheduled, or the parent teacher conference format would have to change in order to schedule more time for this.

4. We wanted to see a higher level of involvement on the part of our students, and the parents.

5. We had hoped to expand the area of the curriculum beyond one subject.

6. Not all the 3rd graders were involved.